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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7210

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 001360

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2019

TAGS: PREL PHUM PGOV TH BM

SUBJECT: THAI FM PRESSES CASE AGAINST BURMA AT ASEAN-EU
MINISTERIAL

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 363 (ASEAN-EU MINISTERIAL)

¶B. BANGKOK 1267 (THAILAND CLARIFIES STATEMENT)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. James F. Entwistle, reason 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Department of ASEAN Affairs Director Suchart Liengsaengthong on June 2 provided us with a readout of the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) on May 27-28 in Phnom Penh (ref A). Suchart highlighted for us the efforts of Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya to address the Burmese criticism that Thailand, as Chair of ASEAN, in releasing a statement regarding the arrest and detention of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) had interfered in Burma's domestic affairs (ref B). Kasit sought to rebut the GOB's accusations, Suchart said. He emphasized the importance of the ASEAN Charter and its three pillars (political, economic, and social). He particularly stressed the importance of the people-centered portion of the Charter and the value that civil society has to play.

¶2. (C) Suchart commented that in the AEMM plenary session, when Thailand had the floor, Kasit stated that ASEAN still had a constructive role to play in dealing with Burma, and that the upcoming Burmese elections should be free and fair. Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners should be released and allowed to play a part in the political process. Kasit also welcomed the extension of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) mandate.

3, (C) Comment: Based on his reported actions in Phnom Penh, Kasit appears unconcerned about drawing further criticism from Rangoon as he continues to press other ASEAN officials to adopt a stronger line on Burma.

ENTWISTLE